

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

Date: DECEMBER 2018

Title: Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre CCTV Review Report Update

Submitted by: John Tradewell (Acting Chief Executive)

Portfolios: Community Safety and Wellbeing

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To update Cabinet on the work from the recent CCTV Review, led by the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing and to seek agreement for next steps.

Recommendation

Subject to the views of the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Cabinet, that Cabinet agree to explore a CCTV system upgrade, including its monitoring arrangements via a paid service, and that further recommendations are brought to Cabinet including options and costings, clearly identifying any budget shortfall and proposed funding, including partnership contributions and possible partnering with neighbouring authorities.

Reasons

The current CCTV system was originally installed approximately 20 years ago and the system has become outdated and as the town centre has evolved there is no longer comprehensive CCTV coverage, to contribute to reducing crime and disorder, reduce fear of crime and assist in attracting additional inward investment.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the recent Borough election, the new administration set out its future priorities and plans in the Council Plan approved at its meeting on the 19th September 2018, including its ambitions to create “A Town Centre for All” and “A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough”. Pursuant to these ambitions, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing has undertaken a review of the CCTV arrangements in Newcastle Town Centre.
- 1.2 In this regard the Cabinet Member has been working in close conjunction with the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee which has considered the issue of CCTV in the Town Centre at its meetings on the 21st June 2018 and on the 10th September 2018. The Cabinet Member and Members from the Scrutiny Committee have undertaken separate visits to the Council's CCTV monitoring facilities as well as reviewing the locations of the cameras. The Cabinet Member has also been to see the monitoring arrangements in a neighbouring authority.

- 1.3 Following the examination of the various options to enhance the current CCTV provision within the Borough, the Cabinet Member is now reporting back to Cabinet to explain the options available to the Council. The intention is that this report on the options will also be considered by the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 3rd December 2018, with a view to the Committee expressing its views on the options so that they may be reported to Cabinet when it considers this matter.

2. Summary of the CCTV Review

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder's review has:

- Considered the existing equipment in place and the current restrictions due to age and limited visibility in some areas due to large trees and blind spots due to changes in the environment.
- Defined the Council's approach to monitoring the existing CCTV system using a paid contracted service.
- Defined the CCTV Volunteers services, which provides additional coverage managed by the Business Improvement District (BID) under a service level agreement, currently funded by the BID, Police and Council until March 2019.
- Considered the opportunities for future development, including retendering the paid service, buying in to a neighbouring authorities system and upgrading the current system.

- 2.2 Having undertaken the Review, the Portfolio Holder has identified a number of potential options a number of potential options:

2.2.1 Remove the existing CCTV system and have no CCTV capacity within Newcastle- under-Lyme Town Centre. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not considered to be a serious option.

2.2.2 Keep the current CCTV system, making no upgrade to the equipment and retender the monitoring contract for the paid service when it expires in March 2019.

2.2.3 Explore a CCTV system upgrade (without monitoring) and present further recommendations to Cabinet including options and costings, clearly identifying any budget shortfall and proposed funding, including partnership contributions.

2.2.4 Explore a CCTV system upgrade, including its monitoring arrangements via a paid service and present further recommendations to Cabinet including options and costings, clearly identifying any budget shortfall and proposed funding, including partnership contributions and possible partnering with neighbouring authorities.

- 2.3 The Portfolio Holder's view is that the option outlined in 2.2.4 is the preferred solution

3. Proposal and Reason for Preferred Solution

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to consider this report and to request Officers to seek funding options and partner contributions for the further development of CCTV in Newcastle Town Centre, with a view to presenting a further proposal to Cabinet for full consideration.

- 3.2 Reasons for the preferred solution include:

- 3.2.1 It is important to have an effective CCTV system in operation in the town centre to deter and reduce crime and disorder, assist with Anti-Social Behaviour enforcement activity, improve public perceptions of the town centre and assist in attracting additional inward investment. The presence of an effective CCTV system is of significant benefit to the Town Centre business community.
- 3.2.2 The Council is unable to fund an upgrade to the existing CCTV system without obtaining additional financial resources.

4. Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Delivering an effective CCTV in the Town Centre contributes to meeting the Council's Corporate Priorities of; a Healthy, Active and Safe Borough and a Town Centre for All.

5. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 5.1 There is no statutory duty to provide a CCTV system, however all other Staffordshire District Councils choose to support the operation of local CCTV systems because it is recognised that there are many benefits of having an effective system in place, such as attracting inward investment and its contribution towards a safer Town Centre and reducing fear of crime.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is being developed for this area of work.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Dependent on the preferred option and decision made by Cabinet and potential partners, there may be additional financial implications or commitments required if further development of the CCTV system is favourable. This would be split into;
- Capital costs – to cover the cost of any upgrading of equipment for the system. This is expected to be significant and in the region of £80k and may be resourced using a range of partner contributions to match any investment made by the Council. Early discussions with partners have been favourable and Officers could continue these to obtain a firm commitment to capital contributions.
 - Revenue costs – to cover the annual costs of the monitoring service required for the effective deployment of the system. This could cost between £10-£60k, dependent on the monitoring coverage required by the Council and there is an existing Council budget available, excluding recharges, as the Council currently spends approximately £27,500 per year on monitoring costs.
- 7.2 There are resource implications for Council Officers who have already been involved in the CCTV Review and who would co-ordinate any further development work for the CCTV system and monitoring service. This will involve use of existing resources including Officers from the Regeneration and Assets teams and also Business Improvement and Partnerships, to co-ordinate partnership working and any potential procurement activity.

8. Major Risks

- 8.1 Failure to take appropriate action regarding the future development of the Town Centre CCTV system may result in a failure of existing systems and insufficient

coverage leading to the Council being unable to sufficiently deliver its strategic priorities;

- Local Services that Work for Local People
- Growing our People and Places
- Healthy, Active and Safe Borough
- A Town Centre for All

8.2 There is also a risk of reputational damage to the Council if it does not achieve the benefits often associated with having an effective CCTV system in place, such as attracting inward investment, a contribution towards a safer Town Centre and reducing fear of crime.

9. Key Decision Information

9.1 This report can be considered key because it results in the Borough Council committing existing resources for the function to which the decision relates.

10. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

10.1 N/A.

11. List of Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 – Portfolio Holder Review of Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre CCTV arrangements

12. Background Papers

12.1 None.

Implications included	Head of Service agreed report, signed & dated	Financial Implications signed & dated	Legal & risk implications signed & dated
Financial			
Legal			
Risk			
Corporate format used			

Appendix 1 – Portfolio Holder Review of Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre CCTV arrangements

The current CCTV system consists of 18 cameras situated within Newcastle under Lyme Town Centre. This system was originally fitted approximately 20 years ago with the exception of some cameras being renewed using external funding. When the system was originally installed the cameras were erected in designated locations and were considered to be fit for purpose. Over the years the Town Centre has evolved and there is no longer coverage within certain highly utilised areas of the Town Centre (see under current restrictions). The cameras operate consistently over 365 days of the year and are monitored jointly by a paid service and by volunteers. 15 cameras are analogue which means that the quality of the image is below average compared to their modern digital counterparts. The control room consists of ten monitoring screens and the appropriate hardware and software to service these. The age of this equipment makes for difficulties when replacement is needed.

Currently the responsibility for CCTV within Newcastle Borough Council sits within the Assets Team in Regeneration Directorate. There was an annual budget for financial year 2017-18 of:-

- Repairs, Maintenance and purchase - £8000
- Accommodation Costs for Control room and staff costs - £15000
- BT Costs - £6500

Monitoring

The CCTV system is currently monitored at the Council's own Monitoring Centre which opened in 2007 by a combination of unpaid volunteers overseen by an SIA accredited operative and a paid CCTV monitoring company.

- Paid Service

The paid, contracted CCTV operatives monitor the CCTV on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings/early mornings at a cost of £20,000p/annum and runs until the 12th May 2019 with an option to extend for a further 6 months.

- Volunteers

There are additionally two unpaid volunteers who provide daytime monitoring of the Town Centre CCTV on certain days and times and who are supervised by an SIA accredited operative. This arrangement is currently managed under a Service Level Agreement between Newcastle Borough Council, Newcastle's Business Improvement District (BID) and the Police. This agreement expires on the 31st March 2019 and there is an uncertainty as to whether this will remain as there is no planned financial contribution commitment from the Council, Police and BID to allow for this. This service level agreement was developed by the Council to encourage further development of the volunteer service. It was intended to be sustainable without the need for further Council funding when it ceases, but it is unclear whether any work has been undertaken to retain the volunteer's service.

Current Restrictions

- Logistics, CCTV Technology & Coverage

The current CCTV system and monitoring costs to Newcastle Borough Council equates to approximately £49500 expenditure for the financial year 2017- 2018 (equipment + monitoring = £49500) with the few additions of some internal recharges. There is no other available Council budget available to support this service further.

With the exception of the digital CCTV camera near the North Staffs Justice Centre, the CCTV cameras produce below average image quality. Footage is extremely grainy and unclear which is not ideal for evidential purposes. Fifteen out of eighteen CCTV cameras are up to twenty years old, technologically outdated and are susceptible to malfunction, which places a burden on maintenance budgets.

The CCTV control room has ten monitors which the CCTV operatives are able to view, alongside their desktop monitor. This type of viewing has largely been superseded by modern large/split screens, which are capable of numerous configurations to suit the operative and incident being followed. The CCTV operatives do not have the ability to replay footage on site which is extremely detrimental for a whole host of reasons. The inability to replay CCTV footage is due to a mixture of licensing and technological issues. The monitors are prone to breaking down which makes it extremely difficult for the operatives to detect and react to incidents on the Town Centre.

The CCTV cameras only cover certain areas in Newcastle Town Centre and there are some blind spots. Whilst this was adequate when CCTV was introduced in the Town Centre, several blind spots have since been created due to changes in environment and architectural changes e.g. new builds, Castle House and the positioning of the CCTV columns, the location and number of CCTV cameras and the outdated technology allowing for substantial monitoring, recording and evidencing.

None of the current cameras have infra-red capability which causes huge issues from a crime detection standpoint. Due to the cameras current specification and age their ability to provide visible images is poor without adequate lighting.

There is a substantial capital outlay however the benefits in greater crime prevention and reduction should help the businesses to generate greater footfall to the Town Centre. The Business Improvement District will consider the idea of making a financial contribution once the Council firms its position with regards to CCTV.

- Trees

At a number of locations there are a number of trees which unfortunately obscure the effectiveness of the CCTV coverage. Some pruning of tree cover is likely to ensure maximum coverage and visibility of the CCTV cameras and also to maintain the Streetscape of the Town Centre.

Upon discussions with the Highways Authority at Staffordshire County Council they have stated that many of the trees are not original highway trees and were installed at the request of the Borough Council as part of environmental/amenity improvements. Although the County Council take ownership of the maintenance of the trees, this comes with a caveat that such maintenance works would only take place if said trees are at risk of, or are diseased, dying or dead, or if they are causing physical issues for the highway user or nearby properties. The County Council would however support (but not in terms of finance or workforce) any work deemed necessary by the Borough Council on the understanding that any works are not detrimental to the overall health

and stability of the trees. Furthermore, any work to the trees (but more specifically felling) would necessitate discussions with Officers due to the Town Centre being a Conservation Area and the Borough Council would have to undertake all necessary consultations prior to committing to the work.

The Borough Council did look at whether pruning would make any actual difference to the CCTV coverage and the consensus was that it wouldn't. For instance, in some locations the pruning would have to be so significant that it may result in the death/complete removal of the trees, which would have a huge impact on the streetscape of the town. Furthermore, tree cover in hard surfaced urban areas bring a number of environmental as well as aesthetic benefits so potential large scale reductions have to be carefully considered and balanced with other factors.

The Borough Council has requested that the Highways Authority completely remove one tree and replace it with a smaller specimen. However some trees cannot be removed and replaced and so a decision will have to be made on the level of pruning required, if any.

Opportunities

The comprehensive review has consisted of numerous meetings that have taken place with Officers of the Partnerships Team in conjunction with the Engineer for the Borough Council. The current overall system itself and the monitoring has been discussed within forums and meetings with other community safety partners such as the Police, Business Improvement District, Joint Operational Group, ASB and Youth Violence meetings and Retailer. The general consensus is that partners are supportive of the CCTV system having a review carried out and seeking ways to improve the system as the review so far has highlighted.

In order to establish what other local authorities provide we have carried out some market research with other authorities within the County which has assisted.

- Buying in to a Neighbouring Authority's System and Monitoring
Stoke-on-Trent City Council are open to the idea of exploring a CCTV partnership arrangement with NULBC to add value to our collective community CCTV network and optimise the value derived from our 24/7/365 monitoring hub capabilities. At this stage, and subject to further discussions Stoke-on-Trent City Council have provided a broad estimate of costs which, over a 10 year agreement, equate to between £10-60K per annum. It must be stressed however that this is only a preliminary estimate and a lot of due diligence will be required before either party are able make or accept an offer and work in partnership. We would hope such a partnership could be explored as an inter-authority agreement avoiding the expense and complexities of a formal tendering exercise.

- CCTV System and Monitoring Update

This could involve installing a new digital system including a possible 13 pan-tilt-zoom digital CCTV cameras, 2 static digital CCTV cameras and 4 extra digital CCTV cameras to be located in key locations within the Town Centre. This is in essence future proofing the Town Centre with the strategic placement of cameras. This option includes for hardware and software replacement to enhance operator experience. This would cost approximately £80,000. Ongoing monitoring costs would need to be explored further as to how the system is overseen and incidents reacted to, this would include an additional cost.

Alternatively a new digital CCTV system as detailed above could also be achieved via hire purchase agreement, the length of which can be up to 5 years. The whole cost of the hire term is illustrated in the table below. Comparisons should ideally be based on annual costs.

Length of Hire Term	Cost Per Month	Cost per Year
5 years	£1,664.00	£19,968.00
4 years	£2,012.80	£24,153.60
3 years	£2,597.60	£31,171.20
2 years	£3,769.60	£45,235.20